

VZCZCXRO0007
OO RUEHROV RUEHTRO
DE RUEHKH #1033/01 2510428
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 080428Z SEP 09
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4388
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001033

NSC FOR MGA VIN, LETIM
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [SOCI](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: CIVIL SOCIETY REPORTS POLITICAL SPACE IN SUDAN SHRINKING
AS ELECTION NEARS

REF: A) KHARTOUM 964 B) KHARTOUM 893

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Northern opposition parties and civil society groups report rising levels of government interference in voter education and political party activities in the runup to the 2010 elections. Groups report delayed and cancelled meetings; violence, arrest and detention of those who attempt to participate in meetings. These incidents underscore the importance, well known to opposition parties and civil society, of reform of the security laws if the 2010 election is to be free and fair. End Summary

Political Parties See Meetings Restricted

¶2. (SBU) On August 16, opposition parties threatened to boycott the election unless security laws were reviewed. In discussions with leaders of the Umma Party, Popular Congress Party and Communist Party, all told Poloffs that current security laws do not allow for freedom of assembly. Leaders said they should not have to ask for permission to hold meetings and gatherings. They are particularly concerned with the powers of arrest of the security services (ref A).

¶3. (SBU) Abdullah Mohamed Adam Douma, Secretary General of the Popular Congress Party (PCP) of North Darfur, told Poloff on August 20 that members of the security services attended many political workshops held in the state. At one such event, two teachers were arrested and one was injured by the security services and had to be hospitalized. Due to NISS monitoring and the fear of being arrested and imprisoned, Communist Party members in North Darfur state refused to meet with Poloff on August 18.

¶4. (SBU) Babaker al-Shafa'i(e) of the Communist Party and Bashir Adam Rahma of the Popular Congress Party both told Poloff on August 19 that the government uses systematic delaying tactics to prevent assembly or rallies. Both Al-Shafa'e and Rahma described delays in the issuance of permits for not only political rallies, but also meetings related to the electoral process and discussions of civil liberties have been shut down or postponed indefinitely, even when these events are held in party headquarters.

Civil Society Meetings Delayed, Cancelled

¶5. (SBU) On August 6, Poloff went to an outdoor meeting and conference in an open square in Al-Sha'abiyah. The program was billed as a commemoration of the passing of John Garang and a discussion of the future of Sudanese Politics. The meeting had been canceled by security shortly before poloff arrived, and police ringed the area. In reaction to this surprise closure, opposition parties drafted and signed a joint memo of protest that they have sent to the Election Commission.

¶6. (SBU) On August 11, Poloff attended another meeting at which electoral law reform was to have been discussed. Event organizers stated that the security services told them that they would not allow the meeting to be held in any public location and the organizers subsequently postponed and relocated the event three times, each time at a location that the security services found unacceptable. They finally opted to hold the meeting at a remote venue which was approved. A participant told Poloff that a number of attendees at the meeting were actually security service observers assigned to monitor the event.

¶7. (SBU) An event organizer in South Darfur told Poloff on August 20 that the NISS had cancelled a workshop on elections and implementation of the CPA despite the fact that the Governor of South Darfur had already issued the necessary permits. According to reports from some civil society leaders around the country, civil society groups are reporting NISS interference in voter education and political party workshops.

¶8. (SBU) Poloff spoke on August 21 with a community leader who said that the NCP is using government ministries to recruit members. In one example, the community leader said, officials from the Ministry of Education directed school head masters to recruit teachers who would in turn recruit students into the NCP.

NISS Promise to "Contain Tensions" Seen as Threat

¶9. (SBU) On August 20, the new director of the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), General Mohamed Atta Al-Moula Abbas, told the press that NISS plans to contain any tensions that might arise following the announcement of the results of the 2010 national

KHARTOUM 00001033 002 OF 002

elections. He warned the political parties against attempting to "create violence and disorder". The Minister of Interior, Ibrahim Mahmoud Hamid, announced on August 20 that the Ministry will provide 27,000 police to secure the elections process, and has hinted that "some political parties may create disorder and chaos to interrupt the process."

¶12. (SBU) Comment: These incidents underscore the need for security law reform to ensure that the 2010 election is free and fair. NCP political will is essential if the needed reform is to occur.

WHITEHEAD